



probably partly stimulated by Kennedy's choices to build gap was

diup

X c strategic forces in 1961 and 1962 even after the missile gap  
esw

is proven in September 1961 (after which McNamara's

persistent

claim that the US buildup was simply a response to exaggerated  
estimates of Soviet forces is clearly false). <L^ . js^ & \_ .\_, \_ cW

^/^- Nor do they acknowledge the impact of repeated threats of  
possible US first-use or first-strike made by McNamara and Kennedy in  
X 1961-62 (RFK is also quoted in the WGBH series); or the impact of a  
decision to expose Soviet strategic nuclear inferiority publicly in  
Gilpatrick's speech of October, 1961 (which I proposed and drafted).

X In other words, just as in their suppression to this date of  
information about US covert "pressure" on Cuba and plans for direct  
intervention, these officials fail to acknowledge any responsibility for  
provoking by US choices -some of them highly questionable, even apart  
from this possible consequence-in the strategic realm.

t. 10. High-level staffwork on the possible motives and impact of Soviet  
deployment of MRBMs/IRBMs in Cuba in August and September 1962 (e.g.,  
NSAM on August 23, Harry Rowen memorandum).

(\*) ^11. Unprecedented secrecy-culminating in the PSALM clearance-  
imposed on handling within the intelligence community of evidence  
(x) relating to "offensive weapons" in Cuba, after Presidential  
assurances to the public and warnings to the Soviets in  
September.

^0^-A-U~\*X\* />--X-JKL £ 4^-C -^

^12. Actual availability of evidence-convincing to some analysts and  
officials, including Nitze (though not to most, and evidently not brought  
to the President's attention)-of the presence of Soviet missiles, some  
days prior to the October 14 U2 flight (forming the basis for its  
scheduling). Out 1?

^13. The equivocality-and the actual wording-of "assurances" given by  
Soviets, such as Dobrynin, about the "defensive character" of Soviet  
<\*) military aid to Cuba, in contrast to later charges-as a major  
justification for US military action-of unequivocal Soviet deceit. (The  
one clearly-established case of of unequivocal deception, from Khrushchev  
and Mikoyan via Georgi Bolshakov, seems to have arrived at the White  
House after the missiles had been discovered and US military action had  
been decided upon)

\*Mt\*V

During the Missile Crisis: after October 14.

D X ^C-14. The actual initial reactions of various principals on learning  
of the presence of the missiles, prior to the first ExComm meeting on  
the morning of October 16. In particular, Paul Nitze's judgment in  
the evening of October 15 (having learned of



the missiles several days earlier) that invasion and airstrike had to be ruled out as too bloody and risky--and that we would just "have to eat them," i.e., reluctantly accept their presence. Dean Rusk, discussing this with Nitze, concurred.

(Nitze, in his interview with Blight and Welch, mentions this discussion but omits to say what his opinion was of possible US responses, or his conclusion; nor are these revealed--indeed, for any of those informed before the meeting--in any other source. Rather, there are frequent--false--assertions that no principal, unless possibly Stevenson, seriously entertained even momentarily the thought of making no military response to the Soviet deployment.)

'7 15. Likewise, McNamara's own response, Tuesday morning October 16; that it had been a mistake for the President to make the warning he did on September 13--he had so advised the President--and there would be no crisis if he had not. . . . (S\*)

D F2 1-6\*. Suggestions by both Taylor--Chairman of the JCS -- and McNamara in the ExComm meeting of October 17 (the first with the President not present) that the presence of the missiles might be accepted without any military response, since as McNamara put it, they made no significant difference in the strategic balance, and they constituted no military threat justifying response.

*see tape*  
These suggestions--quoted in my transcript of Nitze's unpublished notes of October 17 and never cited in any prior discussion--are in sharp contrast to the general assertions cited above, which have been accepted without question in all existing accounts. Thus, those who did not--contrary to all these accounts--take it for granted without hesitation that an active military response was justified and called for, included the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: along with the Assistant Secretary Paul Nitze, who along with Chairman Maxwell Taylor was later counted as a principal hawk. Judging by their positions thenceforth, the Deputy Secretaries in both State and Defense, George Ball and Roswell Gilpatric, almost surely were in this camp. G (+ Stevenson; Stevenson?)

B^i^-- C? 17. Repeated discussion by several participants (not only by Stevenson, uniquely "exposed" in this respect by Barlett and Alsop in December 1962), McNamara in particular, prior to the President's speech of October 22^ of the acceptability and probable necessity of a trade of the missiles in Turkey (and possibly other concessions, perhaps including Guantanamo). O^A\*-^

*data?*  
^ 16. Indication by the President on October 20 -- as shown in Nitze's notes, but cited by others earlier--that he regarded such a trade as acceptable and even probable--not, as McNamara was still describing it publicly, on the WGBH account shown this year, as "inconceivable"--and that he differed with Stevenson



only on the question of when to mention this negotiation option (not, the President decided, in the speech announcing the blockade, as Stevenson urged, but only after the blockade had been implemented).

2/- It is actually consistent with this—though a very attribution, if significant revelation—that in the Moscow meeting's year, on the crisis thiDobrynin is reported to have asserted in some that RFK himself had introduced the suggestion of the Turkish trade as a possibility, in meeting with Dobrynin on Tuesday night, October 23: at the least (reports are vague, and s perhaps Dobrynin's account was, too) RFK said something that led Dobrynin to raise the possibility in his cable of the meeting to Moscow). (If this is true, McNamara, and others, might or might not be aware of it).

19. The possibility that as early as Friday, October 19 (if not earlier) some officials, including McNamara and perhaps the President, had decided fairly strongly against airstrike or invasion at all—given the possibility that some missiles were already operational and might be launched under attack without authorization,

If this were the case (a possibility never hinted at by any participants prior to 1987, and never made explicit or openly discussed to this day) it would imply that the threats of escalation (beyond tightening of the blockade) implied by military preparations for airstrike and invasion before and after the October 22 speech, discussed repeatedly in the ExComm meetings, and explicitly leaked through various channels, were to a considerable extent or perhaps wholly bluffs, aimed at improving the terms of trade in an eventual bargain and at managing the damaging image of such negotiations domestically.

What is inferred here—based plausibly on new evidence, which is less than conclusive—is a possible secret JFK three-part strategy for getting the Soviet missiles out of Cuba without a hot war (though probably not without significant political cost at home, which the strategy sought to minimize): (1) blockade, possibly progressively expanded; (2) threats (bluffs) of airstrike or invasion, accompanied by large-scale and visible preparations and aggressive reconnaissance; (3) negotiations, in which the US at least removed its missiles in Turkey as part of a deal (preferably proposed by Turkey or NATO, or by the UN). or K

From this perspective, it would be negotiations, with real concessions by the US (and perhaps NATO!), that would actually get the Soviet missiles out. The prior blockade and threats would set the stage for these negotiations, impressing both the Soviets and the US domestic audience with the Administration's willingness to act boldly and aggressively, taking risks, in order both to get better terms from the Soviets (hopefully,

It is: "new strategies"  
replacing 1-7: old strategy

jjL^A^m-

1-7-72



on the news in Turkey  
leaf, UK, "news"

11

making no concessions on Berlin or Guantanamo, or elsewhere, other than in Turkey), and to make the actual terms palatable at home and in NATO; -- - L^L^ ^, ux, v~L--, ^L^ Jc\*-^ ^^\_x^\_, f »Jbk~-n, \_^

&v>

(No one, neither hawk nor dove, seems to have imagined as a real possibility what actually happened: that a policy of Soviet blockade and threats alone might lead to S withdrawal of its missiles, without the need to proceed to a third phase either of escalation or, as hypothesized here, a public trade signifying rise in diplomatic parity. If anything, this surp on was more complete the US side than that of the Soviet deployment in the first in place; nor was it convincingly explained the following quarter-century, although the core of the explanation became it apparent in my secret study in 1964. How came about, and the e implications of its being a surprise at th time and subjects of this study.)

for getting  
(1905 for  
diplomacy)

before  
the  
news

k!

This hypothesis offers a basis for a relatively low estimate of the risk of war erupting from the confrontation, limiting this risk to the possibility that the process of threatening (bluffing) might have generated pressures, commitments or surprises that got out of the President's control and led to escalations beyond his original intent. But just how small was this residual risk, given what we know now? And how did the President and other advisors see it then? J\*\_-«,, A\*^, ^ ^ Aft, v^

If an eventual trade, of at least the Turkish missiles, was

C-Lf /U^>

acceptable and necessary from the beginning, how big a risk of war, and of nuclear war, looked to the President (worth) taking to improve appearances and the actual bargain? Did the President see this risk realistically; did he take all steps to minimize it? Was he justified, from any of these perspectives?

S7)

is the  
1987?

20. The President's clear personal position throughout Saturday, October 27, that the public trade of the missiles, proposed that morning by Khrushchev, was a reasonable and acceptable basis for ending the confrontation. This fact--first disclosed in the November 1987 release of the transcript, and not commented on since by any of the participants--is still flatly, falsely contradicted by McNamara's statement on the WGBH show cited earlier, that Khrushchev's proposed public trade was "inconceivable...inconceivable." (McNamara may have taped this statement before the publication of the transcript, but he knew better, and he could surely have had this falsehood edited out any time prior to the broadcast).

Ant.  
Sec.?  
When,  
bull  
thru?  
Was that  
bull?

Thus, it was not inevitable but rather by giving way to his advisors--who did not anticipate the successful outcome the next morning--that the President chose to prolong the crisis by another 24 hours: during which US recon planes were being shot at, with the constant possibility of loss of control over events.



2V 21. Almost alone, McNamara deprecates the straightforward interpretations of RFK's messages to Dobrynin on the night of October 27 as constituting either an ultimatum, on the one hand, or (1% secret trade of missiles, on the other. He cannot believe that RFK went beyond the terms of the small-group discussion before he met with Dobrynin, which he says did not include either a deadline or a definite threat of airstrike or invasion; nor does he see the assurance that the missiles would be removed from Turkey as a trade, but only as a description of a unilateral US policy: ignoring that no prior decision had been made by the President, and that RFK's assurance was conditional on the crisis having been settled satisfactorily.

1987 ? The latter position by McNamara seems simply to be his continuation of the official cover story of 1962. The former skepticism may reflect his own position then of extreme reluctance to see such a threat carried out in 48 hours, or ever, and his belief the President felt the same way; this is consistent with the hypothesis mentioned in 19 above. Either the President or RFK might have decided, after the small-group discussion in which McNamara participated, to go beyond its terms in threatening; but consistent with McNamara's belief, the President--with or without RFK in agreement, or even knowing his mind--might have seen this explicit secret ultimatum as a bluff. *McN can't believe that? or say it?*

McNamara's positions raise the question what he thinks did bring Khrushchev's sudden concession on Sunday morning, without the public trade of the Turkish missiles and without any time pressure on the Soviets in the form of an ultimatum?

27.22. The absence from ExComm thinking on Saturday, Oct. 27, of the possibility that Khrushchev had not ordered the firing of the SAM that destroyed our U-2, nor authorized Castro's firing on US low-level recon planes: both confirmed by the Soviets in 1987 and 1989.

In general, while expressing concern about possible loss of control, McNamara never gives any specifics about how this might have happened (other than possible launching of a Soviet nuclear missile by a low-level officer without authorization, under attack). It is not clear that he has yet realized how close such an escalation--undesired by him and the President--may have come, by the interaction of firing by Cubans and Soviets uncontrolled by the Kremlin and a specific ultimatum by RFK--relaying a commitment by the President and ExComm--on US response to a shootdown.

44A H5L ,23. The urgency and the meaning (problematic) of efforts on the the afternoon and evening of October 27 to "defuse" (or remove warheads from) IRBMs in Turkey (to my dismay, at the time).

( -i .4^ . IP^JZ JP^A^ )

29. When he learned

30. Learning from VN:

about  
giving the  
up

on for transfer  
general families in  
related to RFK

/4^ . Jy-> A^A^ ?

H4-